

ASCALON AND ITS ANTIQUITIES.

THE following is an extract from a letter, dated Jerusalem, Feb. 28, from Mr. E. T. Rogers, cancelliere to the British consulate at that place:—On the morrow I visited the ruins of Ascalon, which I found to be well worth seeing. Here are the remains of two churches, with beautiful white marble prostrate columns of about 20 feet long, with Corinthian capitals and bases also of white marble. Amongst the other ruins are columns of red, blue, and grey granite, and sculpture in many varieties of marble. A great many curiosities are found here by the peasantry, who sell them to the European travellers that pass through the village. They also find a large number of gold and silver coins, figures, ornaments, and idols: these they sell at a weekly fair held in the village of Medg'del. They are bought by the gold and silversmiths from Gaza and Jaffa, who repair to Medg'del for the purpose. Thus are lost to the antiquarian world all the beautiful works in gold and silver which must and do exist in this ancient city, for they are thrown into the melting-pot almost as soon as they are found.

NEW OLD-STAINED GLASS.

DOES it not appear absurd to say that nothing is correct but what is a direct copy of what was done in the middle ages? Why is not progress to be allowed in glass painting and staining? Surely a figure drawn in a natural and easy position is much more pleasing than if put in distorted postures—postures in which no human being could put himself unless deformed. Much of the glass of the present age fixed in our churches is in this mediæval style, so far as its defects go; and, not content with this, many professed judges have their windows daubed and splashed with colour, to give it the appearance of glass which has been exposed to the atmosphere 300 or 400 years. If the question be asked why this is done, the reply given is, that the building is in the Early English, decorated, or perpendicular style; therefore it is absolutely necessary that the glass should be of the same character. To this I do not object; but why dirty it with colour to give it the appearance of age, and why copy all the defects of drawing? Copy the ancients when good, copy their colouring, but do not give your windows the appearance of age: let your glass have the same appearance as you suppose the old windows had when put up. It would be perfectly ridiculous for a mason, having finished the carvings and decorations of a church, to knock off parts of the bosses, mouldings, limbs of figures, &c., because there may be examples of old churches in the same style that have their decorations and embellishments injured by time. If this be not tolerated in masonry, why, then, should it be so in the art of glass painting? Why are the glass painters to stand still?

What could look worse than to see a beautiful Italian church, rich in all its decorations, with its windows filled with painted glass after the Norman style? yet such specimens are to be found even in London. This I must say is not always the fault of the artist executing the work: those who give the orders are frequently to blame. They may have seen in their rambles some good examples of Norman glass—perhaps at Canterbury or elsewhere—which they thought looked very well (no doubt it did where it was): they then go away with the idea that it will look equally well in their church, without considering its style,—and perhaps, being on the church committee, recommend it: the remainder of the committee acquiesce, knowing perhaps nothing about it: the windows are ordered, executed, and fixed, and, as a matter of course, condemned by every one capable of judging.

E. B.

EFFECTS OF NOT ADVERTISING.—A clerk in one of our mercantile establishments writes to his friends at home: "I have a plaguy easy time of it now-a-days—very little work to do—our firm don't advertise."—*American paper.*

MISCELLANEA.

RAILING AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.—With reference to my remarks in February upon the uncouth line which the new arrangement of the railings now forms on the south side of Buckingham Palace, you said in a note at the bottom of page 99, it would not be understood without a diagram. As, however, I think the present line most unartistic and defective, and that an alteration should be made, and the public attention called to the propriety of it, involving no expense but a little labour, I submit it might be explained as follows without the drawing, viz.,—the iron gates separating the Bird-cage Walk from the space by the side of Buckingham Palace near Pimlico Gate, to have the enclosure of St. James's Park on one wing, and Pimlico Gate Porter's Lodge on the other wing. The railing on each wing of these Bird-cage Walk gates ought, for uniformity's sake, to be alike. On the Bird-cage walk side it is so, both wings being circular, but it is not so on the Palace side, the railing round the Lodge being circular while that to the Park is straight: this latter railing forms a very awkward nook in the park, as well as a very unsightly appearance in the Drive; and as the space can be well spared from the latter, it should be altered to correspond with the circular line of railing round the Lodge. . . .

REINS ON THE EUPHRATES.—In a paper by Capt. Lynch, read at a recent meeting of the Asiatic Society, descriptive of the remains of antiquity on the banks of the Euphrates, from Ethdeheen to Asharah, the writer said:—At fifteen miles from Ethdeheen, on a rising ground, lie the ruins of Resaphie, or Sergiopolis, once the property of the Christians of Syria, and where remains of their churches are still found. The lower portion of one magnificent church is nearly perfect. The nave, which is 150 feet long by 80 feet broad, is divided from the isles by rows of white marble columns, of no recognised order. Three splendid arches spring from low buttresses between the columns. A small colonnade ran round the upper part of the church, on which the roof appears to have rested; but this has entirely fallen. The nave is semi-circular at the eastern end; but the place where the altar stood is covered with the ruins of the roof. Behind the altar are several small rooms, beautifully adorned with rich cornices, carved window-frames, and screens which admit the light through delicately-executed trellis-work, carved in marble. The whole area of the city is a mass of ruins; but the external wall is nearly perfect.

BELFAST SCHOOL OF DESIGN.—A brilliant *conversazione* was held in the Royal Institution, Belfast, on 18th inst., at the first annual distribution of the prizes and scholarships of the Government School of design in that city. The Bishop of Down in the chair, when the Earl of Belfast delivered an eloquent address, in course of which he said, "Let the student be assured that the time will soon come—is now at hand, when the diffusion of artistic ideas will drive manufacturers to exceed the narrow and unnatural limits to which they would fain confine their artisans, and, forcing them to shake off the trammels of conventional forms, compel them to seek, not only an imitation of nature, but a combination of the numerous elements which nature affords, into forms as graceful as they are truthful. Thus will art serve manufacture by forcing her to her excellence, while manufacture, on her part, will encourage art by inciting her votaries to that honourable competition, that generous emulation, which arouses dormant talent into energy, and brings genius, 'mute and inglorious,' to light." The *Belfast Newsletter* of 18th inst. gives a full report of his lordship's address, and of the other proceedings connected with what appears to have been a very successful exhibition, which will do credit to the teacher, Mr. Nursey, and his assistants. From the annual report of the committee, which had been previously issued, we find that the number of male pupils taught during last year was 286, comprising a numerous and miscellaneous class of industrials. The female pupils, it is

to be hoped, will be shortly increased in number in a country such as Ireland, in the sewed muslin trade of which, in the north, no less than half a million of females derive a livelihood: the number of female pupils in all last year was only twenty-nine. The contribution of Government in 1850 was 500*l.* and there is hope of additional aid if the public of Belfast do their duty by equivalent subscription. The amount subscribed last year, however, seems only to have been about 300*l.* The densely crowded *conversazione*, at which a great many of the most influential and able inhabitants of the city and its vicinity attended, augurs well, we hope, for the future prosperity of their School of Design.

DREADFUL EXPLOSIONS.—A boiler at the Park-mills of Mr. Marsland, cotton manufacturer, Stockport, exploded on Monday in last week, knocked down one of the mills, and set fire to the ruins, thus killing and burning no less than twenty persons, and injuring many more, while a number escaped only by leaping into the river, and swimming for their lives. The boiler, it is said, was only nine months old. Professor Hodgkinson and Mr. Lillie have been investigating the matter, and a suspicious circumstance has transpired, viz., the extraordinary act of screwing down the steam junction valve, which appears to have been deliberately done by some one yet unknown. Otherwise, so far as we learn, the boiler appears to have been efficient, except in its indications of danger, which, however, may have been also tampered with. The inference, however, seems to be almost too diabolical for implicit belief.—An equally shocking explosion of another kind took place in the Victoria Coal-pit, near Glasgow, on Thursday in last week. Thirty bodies were discovered in exploring the pit after the disaster. They were all blackened and swollen by the fire, besides being mangled by the fall of masses of the strata in the pit during the explosion of the fire damp. It is alleged that 40,000*l.* have been expended in sinking this pit, and bringing it into what was deemed a state of perfect safety.

DEADLY EFFECTS OF WHITE LEAD.—A coroner's jury at Newcastle recently gave a verdict to the effect that a young woman employed in a white lead factory there had died from the effects of white lead. A surgeon employed by the manufacturers stated in evidence that, during the past twelve months, he had about 100 cases of lead colic, but no other death. The women were very careless of consequences, and uncleanly in habit. No personal blame was attached to the employers, Messrs. Locke, Blackett, and Co.

TENDERS FOR SURVEY OF WOLVERHAMPTON.—It is with some pain that I make public the following tenders to the Wolverhampton Board of Health for survey, for I am sure that you will at once agree with me that all such exhibitions of outrageous discrepancy are moral evils; for not only is the public business in question positively retarded thereby, and the opinion of the acting committees totally unsettled, but a direct stigma is cast upon the profession; the common honesty of all conscientious members thereof standing, as it were, impeached:—

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| Geo. Long, Stafford, 18 months . . . | 21,600 |
| Edward Gisborne, London, 15 months . . | 1,275 |
| H. Baylis and Belliss, Stourbridge, 15 months | 1,250 |
| T. B. Bang, Liverpool, 3 months | 1,100 |
| Benjamin Bedford, London, 8 months . . | 1,100 |
| George Taylor, Wolverhampton, 12 months | 1,100 |
| Geo. Bate, Wolverhampton, 12 months . . | 1,080 |
| Clark and Mackinson, London, 9 months | 800 |
| Wm. Dingley, Bayswater, 3 months . . . | 750 |
| Messrs. Gandell, London, 6 months . . . | 640 |
| Wm. Wilson, London, 12 months | 625 |
| J. M. Cleary, London, 2 years | 595 |
| M. Warren, Cardiff, 6 months | 580 |
| James Waddell, Manchester, 9 months . . | 570 |
| Hugh Leonard, Manchester, open | 510 |
| Edw. Ryde, London, 9 months | 500 |
| Henry Beckett, Wolverhampton, 12 months | 450 |
| J. E. Blenkard, Newark, 9 months . . . | 286 |
| R. J. Hoggar, Oxford, 9 months | 274 |

T. MEYRICK, Town Surveyor.